

§ 426.506

42 CFR Ch. IV (10–1–10 Edition)

(7) Conduct an NCD review of any policy that is not an NCD, as defined in § 400.202 of this chapter.

(8) Allow participation by individuals or entities other than—

(i) The aggrieved party and/or his or her representative;

(ii) CMS and/or the contractor;

(iii) Experts called by the parties or Board; or

(iv) Third parties with a clearly identifiable and substantial interest in the outcome of the dispute who have petitioned for and been granted permission by the Board to participate in the proceedings as *amicus curiae*.

(9) Compel the parties to participate in a mediation process or to engage in settlement negotiations.

(10) Deny a request for withdrawal of a complaint by an aggrieved party.

(11) Compel CMS to conduct studies, surveys, or develop new information to support an NCD record.

(12) Deny CMS the right to reconsider, revise, or withdraw an NCD.

(13) Subject to the timely filing requirements, deny an aggrieved party, CMS, or its contractor the right to appeal an ALJ decision.

(14) Find invalid applicable Federal statutes, regulations, or rulings.

(15) Enter a decision specifying terms to be included in an NCD.

§ 426.506 *Ex parte* contacts.

No party or person (except Board staff) communicates in any way with the Board on any substantive matter at issue in a case, unless on notice and opportunity for all parties to participate. This provision does not prohibit a person or party from inquiring about the status of a case or asking routine questions concerning administrative functions or procedures.

§ 426.510 Docketing and evaluating the acceptability of NCD complaints.

(a) *Docketing the complaint.* The Board does the following upon receiving a complaint regarding an NCD:

(1) Dockets the complaint.

(2) Determines whether the complaint is—

(i) The first challenge to a particular NCD; or

(ii) Related to a pending NCD review.

(3) Forwards the complaint to the Board member who conducts the review.

(b) *Evaluating the acceptability of the complaint.* The Board determines if the complaint is acceptable by confirming all of the following:

(1) The complaint is being submitted by an aggrieved party or, in the case of a joint complaint, that each individual named in the joint complaint is an aggrieved party. (In determining if a complaint is acceptable, the Board assumes that the facts alleged by the treating physician's documentation regarding the aggrieved party's (or parties') clinical condition are true.)

(2) The complaint meets the requirements for a valid complaint in § 426.500 and is not one of the documents in § 426.325(b).

(c) *Unacceptable complaint.* (1) If the Board determines that the complaint is unacceptable, the Board must provide the aggrieved party (or parties) one opportunity to amend the unacceptable complaint.

(2) If the aggrieved party (or parties) fail(s) to submit an acceptable amended complaint within a reasonable time-frame as determined by the Board, the Board must issue a decision dismissing the unacceptable complaint.

(3) If a complaint is determined to be unacceptable after one amendment, the beneficiary is precluded from filing again for 6 months after being informed that it is unacceptable.

(d) *Acceptable complaint.* If the Board determines that the complaint (or amended complaint) is acceptable, the Board does the following:

(1) Sends a letter to the aggrieved party (or parties) acknowledging the complaint and informing the aggrieved party (or parties) of the docket number and the deadline for CMS to produce the NCD record.

(2) Forwards a copy of the complaint, any evidence submitted in the complaint, and the letter described in paragraph (d)(1) of this section to CMS.

(3) Requires CMS to send a copy of the NCD record to the Board and all parties to the NCD review within 30 days of receiving the Board's letter, a copy of the complaint, and any associated evidence, subject to extension for good cause shown.